DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

Vol. X No. 24 December 8th 1961 Price: 15 Pf, 5c, 3d.

TAKE YOUR CHOICE:

GDR Proposals

Proposals for the peaceful solution of the German problem were submitted to the West German Government in a letter sent by GDR Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl on December 1st. Here are the main suggestions made in the letter:

Both German states should pledge themselves:

a) to respect the sovereignty of the other state within its own territory; to mark the frontiers between the two states so as to avoid border conflicts.

b) to negotiate their views about a German peace treaty.

c) to renounce atomic armament and the production of nuclear weapons.

d) to support the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the states of the Warsaw Pact and the NATO. To support the admittance of both states into the UN.

e) to empower representatives to negotiate on their future relationship in the form of a confederation. The negotiations should arrange proper relations between the two governments on all factual questions; the mutual recognition of passports so as to permit passenger traffic on a contractual basis; renouncing the discrimination against one another while in other countries; a trade agreement between the ministries responsible in the two governments.

A militarily neutral Germany was the sole possibility of securing the interests of the German people and of peace in Europe, the letter stated.

These arrangements would remain in force until the future reunification of Germany.

W. German Programme

The West German Government completely ignored the peace proposals made by the GDR reported in the left-hand column. West German policy on the question was outlined in a government declaration presented to the West German Bundestag on November 29th. Here are some of the main points of this declaration:

a) The West German Government "rejects categorically any recognition of the communist regime in Central Germany" (West German authorities refer to the GDR as "Central Germany" because they still officially claim territories to the east of the GDR in Poland and the Soviet Union, the ed.).

b) It regards "diplomatic relations with the regime in the Zone (another term meaning GDR, the ed.) or the signing of a separate so-called peace treaty with the regime of the zone as an unfriendly act..."

c) It "regards the strengthening of NATO as the most pressing task at the moment... The plan to form a NATO atomic force should be carried out as rapidly as possible."

d) "We also reject regional security measures in Europe if they are declared steps towards general disarmament, for the main claim of the West to maintain balanced power relations between East and West can only be achieved in a world-wide framework."

The speech, which spoke of a future "genuine peace treaty with an All-German Government" while reiterating complete refusal to recognise the GDR Government, also stressed planned measures to increase the length of army service, strengthen the armed forces, work out a broad series of martial law measures and provide for civilian conscription when an emergency is declared.

"Adenauer Got What He Wanted" – N.Y. Times

In a revealing comment on the Adenauer-Kennedy talks, the top columnist James Reston wrote in the "New York Times" of November 24th:

"...It is apparent that Chancellor Adenauer got most of the assurances he wanted. There is to be no 'recognition' of the Communist East German regime. The 'contacts' between East and West Germany are not to be at a government but only at a private level. There is to be no withdrawal or 'thinning out' or 'disengagement'. ...The political and economic ties between West Berlin and West Germany are not to be cut but strengthenned. And the rights of the West to be in Berlin... are not even to be subject to negotiation with the Soviet Union. In other words, Moscow's major demands have been rejected in toto. Chancellor Adenauer made some concessions. He agreed to build up the West German army to twelve divisions by the end of 1962. He promised to increase the West German military conscription from 12 to 18 months...

"On the basis of what is known of this week's talks, President Kennedy is now basing his European policy, not on any 'special relationship' with Britain, but on a 'special relationship' with West Germany, not on a new accomodation with the Russians, but on the political and economic unification of Western Europe, backed primarily by U.S. and West German military power."

KONRAD'S NEW CABINET

Chancellor — Dr Konrad Adenauer, 85, CDU

Foreign Minister — Dr Gerhard Schroeder, 51, CDU

(The biographies of Adenauer and Schroeder were printed in the last issue of GERMAN REPORT.)

*

Vice Chancellor, Economics Minister — Professor Ludwig Erhard, 64, CDU

Erhard, a Bavarian, fought in World War One, then studied economics. In 1942 the nazis appointed him director of the Institute for Industrial Research. After the war he was Bavarian Minister of Economics and helped plan the West German currency reform of 1948, which was decisive in dividing Germany. Erhard, who has been Federal Minister of Economics since 1949, follows the policy "what is good for big business is good for West Germany". During a wave of price increases in December 1959, he said: "There is no danger from prices. The danger comes from the extravagance of ... our people. This applies especially to the trade unions and their exaggerated wage demands ... I shall oppose such tendencies vigorously." ("Die Welt", Hamburg, December 12th 1959)

Erhard has joined in the claims for German conquest of Polish territory: "Upper Silesia bears witness to German and not to Polish life. This cannot be altered, not even by the fact that it is administered by Poland at the moment." ("Die Welt", August 29th 1960)

In May 1961 he was wined and dined in Madrid by the Spanish government after signing a treaty which agreed on economic cooperation and more West German investments in Franco Spain.

*

Minister of Transport — Dr Hans-Christoph Seebohm, 58, CDU

The son of a mine owner, he studied mine engineering and during the nazi period was director of many mines and factories. He also had a hand in "Aryanising" Jewish property (see below). Transport Minister since 1949, he once belonged to the neo-nazi German Party but later switched to Adenauer's CDU. He is Official Spokesman of the "Sudeten German Landsmannschaft", which demands the annexation of large parts of Czechoslovakia.

Seebohm is the noisiest revanchist in the West German cabinet, but Adenauer has never repudiated even one of Seebohm's demands for foreign territory.

Eight weeks of pressure politics, broken promises and uninterrupted haggling have finally produced Chancellor Adenauer's fourth West German Cabinet; an unsteady coalition agreeing basically only on hating progressives and trade unions, building up A-bomb stockpiles while undermining negotiations, and keeping prices up and wages down. The three parties represented are:

1. CDU (12 members) — the Christian Democratic Union, Adenauer's party, which has dominated West Germany since the first government there.

2. CSU (4 members) — The Christian Social Union, Bavarian wing of the CDU, is led by Defence Minister Strauss and is even more rabidly opposed to peaceful negotiations than its sister party, if that is possible.

FDP (5 members) — The Free Democratic Party, in the Cabinet because Adenauer's CDU-CSU no longer has a Bundestag majority, is a peculiar conglomeration of young careerists, junior Wehrmacht officers from World War Two, vicious ex-nazis and "liberal" businessmen.

Strangely enough, two members of the Cabinet are really "foreigners". Both Lemmer and Krone come from West Berlin, which is not a part of West Germany.

"This year a half-million Sudeten Germans must gather at the demonstration in Munich to show world public opinion that we will never give up our claims to our homeland. Our question will remain unsolved until we have regained possession of our home soil." ("Sudetendeutsche Zeitung", March 12th 1960)

"The German East includes not only the Elbe and the Oder, but also Bohemia and all areas where Germans once settled." (August 2nd 1953)

As Minister of Transport he ordered that highway signs be put up showing the distance to cities in eastern Europe once ruled by Germany. He also ruled that highway restaurants and railway stations should decorate dining rooms with maps and other reminders of "territories stolen from Germany."

West German news magazine "Spiegel" commented on May 17th 1961: "Seebohm's militant anti-communism, which is so appreciated by Konrad Adenauer, has a material as well as an ideological basis. He can only hope to regain his private property, confiscated in Egerland (Czechoslovakia) in 1945, if the Czech communists are driven out. This property consists of a share of the Brittania Coal Mines, which passed almost entirely into the hands of the Seebohm family in 1939 as a result of Aryanisation".

*

Minister for All-German Questions — Ernst Lemmer, 63, CDU

Studied economics, fought in World War I, worked as trade union official after war. Member of the Reichstag from 1924 until 1933 (German State Party); in May 1933 he voted for the Enabling Act giving Hitler dictatorial powers. During the Hitler period he worked as correspondent for Hungarian, Swiss and other foreign newspapers in Berlin. Because of his reputation abroad as vaguely liberal, he was used by the nazis to plant material in the foreign press. In November 1936, Lemmer wrote an article for the "Berner Bund", criticising foreign newspapers which attacked anti-Semitism in Germany. "The situation of the 400,000 Jews still living in Germany will certainly not be helped by such excesses on the part of irresponsible writers," he wrote. Then he reported to Herr Diewerge, Goebbels' deputy, saying, "I believe that the formulation meets our wishes, but is so expressed that it will really be published in the liberal Swiss paper which I work for."

Lemmer's present Ministry is largely concerned with disrupting life in the GDR, organising espionage and making elaborate plans for returning the GDR's factories and lands to the old industrialists and Junker landlords after the GDR has been destroyed.

Lemmer: "We have a good espionage system". ("Daily Express", November 10th 1961)

*

Labour Minister — Theodor Blank, 56, CDU

Official of Catholic trade unions before Hitler. He studied engineering during the Hitler period and was a lieutenant in the Wehrmacht during the war. In November 1950 Blank was given the task of organising a West German army — at first secretly, then later officially. In 1955 he was appointed Minister of Defence. On June 27th that year he told the Bundestag: "After 1945 there was a period in which old soldiers were unjustly despised. Our Government knows the troubles of the former soldiers. The German soldier always did his duty courageously, uprightly and obediently." In an

interview early in 1953 he stated: "In the new army due recognition will be given to devoted service in the old Wehrmacht... We do not intend to screen officer candidates or take steps against them for their deeds in the past."

After he was pushed out of the Defence Ministry by Franz-Josef Strauss, he was given the Labour Ministry. His main task has been to work out legislation limiting trade union rights and cutting back the social security system.

*

Minister for the Upper House and the Provinces — Dr Hans-Joachim von Merkatz, 56, CDU

Studied law and economics. After 1935 Merkatz, a member of the Nazi Party, taught at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Foreign and International Law. Then he switched to the Ibero-American Institute till 1945: this was the nazi centre for organising espionage in Latin America during the war.

After the war he helped organise the neo-nazi German Party and was one of its top leaders until, together with Minister Seebohm, he decided to switch over to Adenauer's party in July 1960.

Merkatz, whose name means "a long-tailed monkey" in German, is a leading advocate of the Moral Rearmament organisation.

He is also official spokesman for the "Pomeranian Landsmannschaft", which demands large pieces of Polish territory. At a rally of this organisation, he said: "I greet this impressive meeting of the Pomeranians, which shows the world that the cry 'Pomerania belongs to us' is a reality..." ("Die Welt", October 27th 1960)

On February 24th 1955 he stated: "We have gambled with the great inheritance of our grandfathers, and we have lost. Now we must win back what Bismarck and others won."

*

Housing Minister — Paul Luecke, 47, CDU

Luecke was a leader in the Catholic scout organisation until he was conscripted in 1935. The Wehrmacht sent him through engineering school, made him an officer, and assigned him to purchase and inspect armaments and ammunition from the big Berlin arms factories. He was also in France, where he was wounded in a fight with French resistance forces.

Luecke has been Housing Minister since 1957; he was responsible for the 1960 "Luecke Law" which cancels rent controls and raises rents steeply. He has always plugged the building of costly private homes at the expense of low-price housing.

In summer 1953 he led a successful battle against an atomic energy bill because one clause might possibly have hindered atomic bomb construction. On August 31st 1961 he reiterated: "The Bundeswehr needs the most modern weapons, including atomic weapons. I would refuse to work in a Cabinet which refused to arm the Bundeswehr with atomic weapons."

He has also demanded a law banning the GDR national anthem or flag in West Germany, even at international athletic meets.

*

Minister for Special Tasks — Dr Heinrich Krone, 66, CDU

After studying economics and languages, Krone moved up to a leading position in the Catholic Zentrum Party. He was a member of the Reichstag from 1924 until 1933; as Deputy General Secretary, he helped arrange for the deputies from his party to vote in May 1933 for the Enabling Laws, which granted Hitler dictatorial powers.

In 1929 he wrote: "A new Fuehrer idea is struggling to emerge now that liberalistic thinking is disappearing. The new youth will grant the true Fuehrer respect and their readiness to obey." ("Jugend und Staat — Gedenkbuch der Reichsregierung")

Krone, in the Bundestag since 1949, became chairman of Adenauer's CDU/CSU fraction in June 1955, which made him one of the most important men in framing West German policy. He has always been one of Adenauer's most zealous backers. He fought especially vigorously for a West German army and atomic armaments.

*

Minister of Health — Dr Elizabeth Schwarzhaupt, 60, CDU

Studied law; her career as a judge was interrupted by the nazi seizure of power. She worked instead as legal adviser to the Reich Pensioners' Association and then later as attorney in the Church Chancellery of the Evangelical Church. After 1948 she switched to the Church Foreign Section and was elected to the Bundestag in 1953.

On May 24th 1960, as spokesman of the Bundestag Legal Committee, she helped kill a bill extending the statute of limitations for war crimes of the nazis. She said that the time limit on prosecuting such crimes should not be extended because this would "create inequality between political and unpolitical offenses".

Last Issue in 1961

This is the last issue of GERMAN REPORT for 1961.

The next issue, early in January 1962, will be a specially enlarged 10th Anniversary number.

"She is one of those politicians who have always been in favour of giving the Bundeswehr atomic weapons." ("Welt der Arbeit", Cologne, November 17th 1961)

Dr Schwarzhaupt was one of the most vigorous supporters of Family Minister Wuermeling in his successful efforts to make divorce more difficult. She is West Germany's first woman minister.

*

Minister for Family Affairs — Dr Franz-Josef Wuermeling, 61, CDU

Studied law and political economy. Worked under the nazis as senior civil servant until 1938. From 1939 till 1947 he was active in the basalt industry — after 1942 in the management of the Basalt A. G. firm in Linz, occupied Austria. Has held the Family Ministry since 1953. Wuermeling: "We want young wives to work in their households and raise children... We must have a population policy which leads to a constant surplus of births and thus to a rejuvenation of the German people... The biological strength of the eastern European peoples gives them a natural drive towards expansion, thus creating a population pressure against western Europe which will roll over free culture unless we succeed in keeping the people young and vital and in this way create the force to re-settle the eastern territories." ("Spiegel", November 4th 1953)

Wuermeling grants regular government subsidies to reactionary youth groups and to the old Prussian-type student duelling groups banned during the first post-war years.

*

Minister of Agriculture — Werner Schwarz, 61, CDU

Fought in World War One, studied agriculture. Settled down in 1926 as prosperous farmer. During World War Two he was local "Fuehrer" of the "Reichsnaehrstand", the nazi farm control organisation. Elected to the Bundestag in 1953, he became Minister in September 1960. His agricultural policy is to encourage the strengthening of the large farms at the expense of small farmers, who are being forced off the land.

*

Defence Minister — Franz-Josef Strauss, 46, CSU

Strauss fought in World War Two as a lieutenant, first in France, then in the Soviet Union, and finally was nazi indoctrination officer for anti-aircraft troops. He made friends with the American occupation authorities immediately after the war, and made a quick political career, becoming General Secretary of the Bavarian CSU in 1949, Bundestag member in the same year,

Cabinet Minister without Portfolio in 1953 and Atomic Power Minister in 1955. In 1956 he eased Theodor Blank out of the post of Defence Minister.

Since then he has staffed the West German Wehrmacht with nazi generals, getting many of them into top NATO posts; obtained bases in France, Britain, Italy and other countries; broken down many of the limitations originally imposed on West German armaments; and built up powerful armed forces based on atomic weapons and rockets.

Strauss: "The Prussian officer is the ideal type of German." (June 29th 1952)

"There must be a continuity of tradition between the German soldiers of World War Two and the German soldiers of the future. The duties the future soldier will face will be the same as those faced by the older generation of soldiers." (March 14th 1954)

"Every aggressor should know that the echo to the first rifle-shot will be a nuclear and thermo-nuclear explosion." (February 28th 1958)

"We are living in a technical age in which the combined strength of our allies is sufficient to wipe the Soviet Union off the map." (November 11th 1956)

*

Minister of the Interior — Hermann Hoecherl, 49, CSU

The new head of West Germany's police apparatus was a public prosecutor and judge in Regensburg, Bavaria, under the nazis. He was a lieutenant in World War Two. After his release from prisoner of war camp he returned to his law practice in Regensburg, then moved up the ladder again — public prosecutor, district court councillor, member of the local legislature and then, in 1953, member of the West German Bundestag. Since 1957 he has been chairman of the Bavarian CSU fraction in the Bundestag.

In the Bundestag, where he is known as a "loud Bavarian" but a bad speaker, Hoecherl helped to defend the Government in its atomic weapon policy in 1958, when it was under severe attack from the opposition parties; in this debate he was the only deputy to jump to Adenauer's defence after an opposition demand that he retire. He has always taken Adenauer's side in all conflicts. He demanded that the Social Democrats "reject all campaigns aimed at hindering the arming of the Bundeswehr with modern weapons or even their stationing on German soil" ("Die Welt", May 31st 1960) and told the Bundestag in August 1958 that "hard-hitting actions in the sphere of psychological warfare are urgently necessary."

He has fought to tone down a very mild law against cartels and monopolies, opposed a measure to aid the crisis-struck Ruhr coal miners, and taunted West Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt for having fled Germany during the nazi period.

*

Minister for Atomic Power — Dr Siegfried Balke, 59, CSU

A chemist, he worked with a series of important chemical companies; after 1952 he was director of the Wacker-Chemie firm, controlled by the huge post-war I. G. Farben trusts. Balke is also chairman of the Society of the Bavarian Chemical Industry and vice-president of the West German Association of the Chemical Industry, one of the main monopoly groups in the country. He has been a Cabinet Minister since 1953.

On April 23 1961 he was guest of honour of Franco's Minister of Industry, Planell. He then led an official West German delegation in visits to Spanish atomic reactors and uranium mines and made secret agreements with the Franco Government on coordinating atomic research.

*

Post Minister — Richard Stuecklen, 45, CSU

Worked as electrician, studied engineering, fought in World War Two. Became manager of his father's business. Bundestag member since 1949, Minister since 1957.

A lesser figure, Stuecklen made news in May 1958 by preventing postal employees from taking part in a referendum against atomic weapons. He called the campaign against atomic weapons and for negotiations, led by the Social Democrats at the time, "irresponsible political hate propaganda".

Stuecklen, a friend of Strauss, was almost the only man to defend the Defence Minister when he was implicated in a series of morals scandals.

Stuecklen on February 3rd 1960: "Adenauer is the most radiant old man of my life."

*

Finance Minister — Dr Heinz Starke, 50, FDP

The new Finance Minister was a judge under the nazis, then served in the Wehrmacht as a captain on both eastern and western fronts. Active as a businessman and economics expert after the war, he has been a member of the European Parliament in Strasbourg and a manager of his provincial Chamber of Commerce and Industry since 1950. A member of the war-mongering "Silesian Landsmannschaft", he has been given the job of maintaining and developing close relations between his party and the ethnic German groups demanding West German expansion.

*

Minister of Justice — Dr Wolfgang Stammberger, 41, FDP

A lawyer and infantry officer during the war, the new Minister of Justice has made a mark politically only as city councillor in his home town of Cöburg and as chairman of the Bundestag Health Committee, where he urged that social security dues should be increased.

*

Minister for Economic Cooperation — Walter Scheel, 42, FDP

This new ministry will deal with "development aid" in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Scheel originally studied banking, then served as an officer in the Luftwaffe during the war. Hitler awarded him the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Class. After the war he worked as manager of an engineering factory, and now owns a firm called "Intermarket" which undertakes public opinion polls for industrial firms. A member of the Bundestag since 1953, he had a fairly liberal reputation in 1956 when he took part in discussions with the Liberal Democratic Party of the GDR, but he has since dropped such ideas. He is a strong advocate of Britain joining the Common Market.

*

Treasury Minister — Hans Lenz, 54, FDP

The new Minister is a great-grandson of Matthias Hohner, founder of a famous harmonica firm, and he heads the Hohner Foundation. An officer, he was wounded on the eastern front during World War Two, and received the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Class. He is deputy chairman of the Free Democratic Party.

*

Refugee Minister — Wolfgang Mischnick, 40, FDP

An officer in World War Two, the new Minister was awarded the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Class. He was active in politics in Dresden (East Germany) at first, but clashed on political issues in 1948 and went to West Germany where he quickly advanced. According to the conservative "Tagesspiegel" of West Berlin, "Mischnick is an active foe of welfare state tendencies. He claims that the government should admit duties towards its citizens, but that the personal responsibility of each individual should stand in the foreground." (November 12th 1961)

Mischnick was spokesman for the FDP in proposals to cut economic aid for workers in case of sickness.

Facing the German Problem

by J. P. Corbett

Professor of Philosophy, University of Sussex

A British professor recently visited the two German states, and then spoke on his experiences in the Third Programme of the British Broadcasting Corporation. What he had to report is of such general interest that we are reprinting his speech in somewhat shortened form.

To put ourselves in the shoes of the ordinary West German at this moment we must suppose that it is not Brandenburg and Saxony but, say, the north country and Scotland that are governed by a communist party under the ultimate control of Russia ...

How can ordinary West Germans feel anything but indignation, often rage, at the mere existence of such an East German regime — which, to deny it any political legitimacy, they still call the Soviet-occupied zone?

But to understand the German situation we must also put ourselves into the shoes, not perhaps of the ordinary East German but of East German communists. To them the horrors of the nazi past bulk larger than they do in Western minds: many of the older ones suffered terribly themselves; one of my friends lost more than thirty relations in the camps; and when they look across the frontier to the Federal Republic they see the identical capitalistic institutions, whose masters once put Hitler into power and acquiesced in his atrocities, not only flourishing unchanged but building up a new military force and breathing menace. By contrast, they feel that they, with Russian help, have finally destroyed the sinister alliance of Prussia with the Ruhr, and although they realize that the way is hard they believe that, in the common ownership of the means of production they are laying the foundations — the only possible foundations — for a sound and peaceful German life.

Meanwhile, these hostile political attitudes of East and West are reinforced by countless other trends and influences: everything, indeed, in the lives of the two groups of Germans is rapidly developing in such a way as to bind them more and more irrevocably not to each other but to Washington or to Moscow. The process has already gone far. Last July when I was in Berlin, and one could still move freely across the city, I used to spend half my time discussing social and philosophical issues with colleagues in the East and the rest of the time covering the same ground with their opposite numbers in the West. As I went to and fro I felt that my mind was splitting like Germany itself. Often it seemed beyond the wit and energy of man to hold together in one frame of thought the flatly contradictory views that I was given of every matter that arose, from the supply of butter to the state of the churches, and from comparative rates of economic growth to the comparative treatment of ex-nazis. And why should an Englishman even try? I felt — and feel — that there are two good reasons: we have done our bit to create the German situation which my experiences reflected, and so should help to face the consequences; more deeply, that situation is our very own, confronted as we are too with the seemingly inexorable growth of communist power all round the world.

The strategy of the Western powers towards eastern Europe during the last dozen years has rested on the vague assumption that if only the Western alliance were made strong enough, communist power would either collapse or be rolled back. In retrospect one feels that it ought to have been perfectly obvious to us all that the Russian social system, having withstood the nazi onslaught, would neither itself collapse nor let its weaker brethren do so and, equally, that the NATO powers would never agree to wage war for either purpose. In fact, however, the Western powers not only allowed themselves to shirk these truths but positively encouraged the West Germans to build their Federal Republic on the illusions that if only it was integrated economically into the Common Market and militarily into NATO and, in spite of the doubts and fears of many of its citizens, powerfully rearmed, so as to become part of a great force pressing against the edge of eastern Germany, then somehow or other the East German regime would disintegrate, Germany would be reunited, and all would be well. We now know, however, that these policies have helped to bring about precisely the opposite result; and so we must consider why it was that we succumbed to such palpable illusions and what we can now do.

The mistake that we have made about eastern Europe during the last fifteen years is no more, I think, than a particular form of the mistake that we have made about communism during the whole of the last forty-four. From the October Revolution down almost to this moment we have been convinced that the social sytem that the communists have been developing is — morally, economically, and politically — absolutely wrong, and therefore that despite some incidental achievements it is bound eventually to fail. Communism, we have thought, despite its prowess in war, consists in equal proportions of wickedness and folly, and has no natural and enduring life. It was largely this conviction, I

Christmas in Dresden...

... with Christmas tree, presents and the traditional Dresden "Stollen" cake. For more about Christmas and many other aspects of life in the German Democratic Republic, subscribe to the full-colour, handsomely-illustrated monthly magazine GDR Review. Sixty pages of interesting reading.

For details on how to subscribe, write to

GDR Review
Verlag Zeit im Bild
Spenerstrasse 21
Dresden A 19
German Democratic Republic

Please specify which language you prefer. GDR Review is published in English, Danish, Swedish, French, Finnish, Spanish and German.

am sure, that induced us to accept that policy for Germany and eastern Europe that has now gone bankrupt; and now that it has done so it is not that policy alone, but our whole judgment of communism that must be called in question. Perhaps, for all the many things that we abominate, and in my view rightly abominate, in communist society, it is not fundamentally wrong; perhaps, like our own society, it is a mixture of good and bad. We know that, on account of the balance of military power, we have got to live with it; perhaps we can; but perhaps the only way we can is by admitting that, as the communists claim, it is a genuine and positive form of human life, deserving as much our respect for some things as our abhorrence for others.

Perhaps the frequent comparison of communist with nazi power which treats communism, like nazism, as one vast, terrible aberration from every form of reason, decency and justice, is a mistake. Perhaps it is not the peculiar fate but the peculiar opportunity of the German people to be divided as they are, since it therefore falls to them, more than to anyone else, to prove in action that humanity can transcend this seemingly absolute division.

I do not underestimate the import of these suppositions. Good friends in Western Germany, even in England, have almost turned their backs upon me for daring to suggest them; and I know that prevailing eastern, just as much as prevailing western, opinion regards those who like myself refuse to accept the absolute exclusiveness of the two systems as a blend of knave and fool. And yet I am impenitent. I have talked to nazis as well as to Leninists and I am absolutely convinced that whereas the nazi was beyond the reach of what we know as reason, the Leninist is not. It may indeed be beyond our wit and energy at present to span the intellectual gulf that yawns between the nations; but when I think of the weapons that are accumulating on each side of it I feel the necessity to try. And as I tried this summer, discussing common problems with a dozen or so East Germans, it appeared to me that the real fellow travellers, the real betrayers of the substance of our Western life, are those who confront communism with a flat, inflexible, and therefore blind opposition.

The men with whom I talked, apart from two officials in the ministry that deals with higher education, were all members of the faculties of the Humboldt University in Berlin and of the Karl Marx University in Leipzig. They were obviously of widely different social origins and experience, but neither in that nor in their personal demeanour was there any striking difference between them and their opposite numbers in an English common room. They were mostly members of the Party and all shared the same ultimate convictions, but they observed a scrupulous ideological courtesy, often prefacing their remarks with an 'I know you think otherwise, but this is how we think'. The real differences from conditions here were first, of course, that there was an acknowledged common way in which they thought about all philosophical and social issues, and then that these men are, and know themselves to be, a new kind of social leader. Whereas the English intellectual always feels that he lives on the margin of events, the communist intellectual knows that he is right at the centre of the web of power. When so many traditional habits have been destroyed or are decaying, it is ideas and theories that have to give society the sense of continuity and the framework of agreed belief that common action needs. To go into their club was therefore like going into something which combined the qualities of Oxford, Pall Mall, and the City; and though in eastern Germany the universities pay for this privilege by having to accept a kind of political co-ordination which would seem intolerable to us, the ordinary member of their faculties enjoys as a result great social and material advantages. To put it at its lowest: they are in on a good thing, and know it. To put it at its highest: they feel that they are being given the due rewards of carrying a large part of the responsibility in what they hold to be the greatest social venture of all time.

It is no doubt the natural result of the working of these two factors that the first thing that struck me about the communist intellectuals to whom I found myself listening for hour after hour was their sheer ability. Press reports of communist societies, above all of the German Democratic Republic, as it calls itself, produce an image of a clique of party hacks tyrannizing over a hostile or at best acquiescent population. Whatever may be the general truth or falsity of this image, it is certainly incomplete. Owing to high casualties under nazi rule the ranks of outstanding senior men in the East German universities are certainly a bit thin, but I was greatly impressed by the quality of the younger men, the assistants of between twenty-five and thirty-five who have been trained under the present regime and who will be taking the lead in eastern Germany during the next decade. The dominance of Marxism has certainly not dissuaded young men of great ability from taking up a career in the arts as well as in the science faculties of East German universities: they were just the sort of young men who, in England, collect the Oxbridge firsts . . .

The second thing that struck me about these men was their confidence that the future belonged to them. They were friendly, seeming glad to meet someone from outside the communist camp, but I felt that they really were not very interested in what we think and do. They received what I told them rather as if it were information about the activities of some insects in a distant land. This was not because they are indifferent to the future of mankind; on the contrary, that is what interests them

Booklets on German Questions

We now have a small stock of booklets and folders in English; they include an illustrated booklet on industrial and social development in the GDR called "Seven Historic Years"; a booklet on the Berlin problem, with many photographs and documents, called "A Central Problem"; and two small folders, one on East Berlin's museums and one on the case of Heinz Reinefarth, SS general who suppressed the Warsaw uprising and who is now West German politician. Please check which you want: we shall send them off as long as they last. Only one of each per person, please, and only for readers not living in the GDR.

- ☐ Seven Historic Years
- ☐ A Central Problem
- ☐ Berlin's Museums
- ☐ Heinz Reinefarth

Mail the coupon to DEMOCRATIC GERMAN REPORT
Berlin W 8, Friedrichstrasse 167, German Democratic Republic

Name .....

Address .....

(Block Letters Please)

most of all. Rather it was because they felt that in relation to that future what *we* think and do has small importance. The future is being made in *their* countries they seemed to think, while we belong to the past; they are in the main stream of history while we are just idly playing in the shallows. This unflattering comparison has, I think, a rational basis. It is after all true that the communists have identified themselves more categorically than anyone else with thre trend which Marx rightly saw would dominate our epoch, the insistence of the masses of mankind in every quarter of the world that the scientific and industrial resources invented by capitalism should be set to work by the state in order to give them the ease and wealth which have hitherto been the privilege of a small minority of men ...

My conclusions from these and many similar observations were irresistible. German conservatism, by supporting or condoning the activities of the nazis and thus eventually bringing the Russians into Europe, has produced the situation which above all it wanted to avoid, an established German Communist state. This state, for all its dependence upon Russia, is rapidly developing a life and vigour of its own. It will not collapse and cannot be destroyed. Germany will therefore remain indefinitely divided, a microcosm of the divided world, by whatever diplomatic names this division may come to be described. Those are the facts; but what about policy?

I am certain that the communist powers have no desire nor intention to attack us; we are not, in their view, worth attacking; the recent speeches in Moscow have showed that Mr Khrushchev staked his political life three years ago on defeating the Stalinists like Mr Molotov who still think in terms of war... So what is to be done? This, I believe, at least: that while holding our practical defences we should do everything we can to provoke and encourage the free play of thought across this equivocal divide. We should get as many communists to visit us as we can and press ourselves upon them in return. We should go out to meet them intellectually without fear or carping or calculation but patiently and calmly; neither to praise nor to blame, as Spinoza put it, but to understand.

In this way, I am convinced, an intellectual and moral atmosphere can be created in which practical negotiations might emerge from endless misunderstanding and recrimination, and turn unsettled into settled peace; while if we continue to meet the communist intellectual challenge with flat hostility we shall only help to confirm it precisely in those dogmatic and unprincipled habits of thought which is our highest interest to dispel. Why indeed should we fear to take this initiative if in the crucial point of the freedom and security of individual thought we, as we claim, are in the right? And, in the particular case of Germany, since the two sides find it hard to talk with one another, we should do what we can to talk with both.

I hope to go back to both Germanys next year to do just that.

"The Listener", November 2nd 1961

VIPs Crowd to Cheer Krupp

"I express with pride my adherence to the name Krupp", stressed Ludwig Erhard, Vice Chancellor and Economics Minister, at a huge celebration of the notorious munition firm's 150th anniversary. He condemned the Allied order to break up the concern, convicted of criminal wartime activities, saying it was "a product of retaliation and revenge". "It is the duty of the Government to recognise the industrial leadership of the Krupp family," he stated.

More than 2000 government leaders, heads of the Christian Democratic, Free Democratic and Social Democratic parties, ambassadors from 26 countries and other prominent West German and foreign guests attended the reception in a huge Krupp-made plastic hall.

West Germany's ex-president Theodor Heuss defended the century-old production of munitions by the company. He praised the action of former High Commissioner John McCloy in freeing Alfried Krupp from prison in 1951 and annulling the confiscation of his property, and he too insisted that the Allied ruling that Krupp must sell coal and steel properties should be cancelled.

Krupp had been convicted by the Nuremberg Tribunal in 1948 of using ten thousands of men and women forced labourers ranging from 6 years to over 80 years in age and treating them worse than animals. His firm is today one of the largest in Europe and employs over 110,000 people.

Pressure on Denmark...

Danish military leaders finally acceded to West German pressure and agreed on a joint Danish-West German Baltic command of the NATO. The new military organisation, which has been opposed by many sections of Danish public opinion for years, will be finally initialed this month, it is expected. Although a majority of leading posts were conceded to the Danes at first in order to push through the agreement, West German naval officers will command NATO ships patro[illegible] in the Baltic and will [illegible] other important post[illegible] unit.

Military experts in Western Euro[illegible] pointed out the danger of this in[illegible]crease in West German military influence. A revealing statement by Captain G. Bidlingmaier in 1959 in the semi-official West German magazine "Wehrkunde" was recalled: "The more the West German Navy develops its new role, the more it will guarantee that the exits from the Baltic are barred to the enemy but that the entrances are open to the allied fleets at all times; only then will the force of the great sea powers be effective in the Baltic and make the Baltic a NATO sea."

...and Belgium

General Hans Speidel, commander-in-chief of NATO's Central European land forces and once top military leader for the nazis in World War Two, paid a special visit to Belgium in late November. He examined three Belgian troop training areas.

His visit coincided with current plans to station West German troops in Belgium. It is expected that the first units from West Germany will soon move into the east Flemish town of St. Niklaas.

Young Socialists Weaken

A West German congress of Young Socialists backed down on its former programme and followed its parent organisation, the Social Democratic Party, in a sharp turn to the right. Most of the delegates voted to drop the campaign against atomic weapons, abandon the call for diplomatic relations with Poland and Czechoslovakia, avoid any stand in the Algerian struggle for independence and back up West Germany's armed forces build-up.

JAN 17 1962

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By Allen Mann

Every so often West Berlin stages a march or rally directed against the GDR, just to keep the pot boiling, so to speak. This is fairly routine by now, and the journalists, knowing what is expected of them, regularly remind the world that poor brave West Berlin is holding out, no matter what evil emanates from the East. Such a march was organised late in November, aimed at school children and students and addressed [illegible]ner Goebbels-man Ernst Lem[illegible]ister for All-German the West German

But things somehow went wrong after Lemmer had finished his rabble-rousing. The youngsters, having served their purpose, were supposed to disperse. They didn't, however, and suddenly the police went into action. Usually West Berlin's police are only too happy to see such demonstrations, but this time someone must have got his signals mixed, for they started to kick and club the boys and even the girls with great brutality; many tears flowed, and not a little blood. Angry letters of protest were soon in the West Berlin papers reminding the police that such methods were only meant for leftists and peace demonstrations; these youngsters had wanted to protest against "police methods in the East", after all. But West Berlin's police have a solid foundation of old nazis and SS men, and such people do not always appreciate subtle differences when they start swinging.

This whole unhappy episode recalls the story about a demonstration in New York years ago. A prosperous citizen, damaged but indignant, was being roughly dragged away by a policeman whose nightstick was poised for another blow. "But, offi-cer," the man protested self-righteously, "you're making a terrible mistake. I'm one of the anti-communists!" The cop answered: "Listen, mister, I don't care what kind of a communist you are, shut your mouth and get into the police wagon!"

More Normal

Life on the eastern side of the frontier through Berlin has settled down to a fairly normal pace by now. Reconstruction of the central part of town is continuing quite rapidly, many naked brick walls and other remnants of the war have at last been removed or repaired, and it is often necessary to pick one's way through one construction site after another. The inevitable shortages of just the things one wishes to buy at any particular moment are still with us, I am afraid, but marked improvements in other spheres — like laundry and dry cleaning service, for example — compensate for them and help one to "grin and bear" the petty nuisances of searching or waiting in queues.

And then, the minds of East Berliners are turning more and more to the event which is coming ever closer as I write these lines — I am referring, of course, to Christmas. To counter any of the perennial stories that "Christmas is banned in the GDR this year", I can report that it is all there, as ever — Christmas trees, carols, presents, and even tinsel angels and shiny stars. In fact, the Christmas celebrations will be celebrated especially long and joyously this year, for the regular two holidays (the 25th and the 26th) come right next to a weekend.

Christmas Circus

What will people be doing during the Christmas season in East Berlin? Those with children may go to the circus, as I finally did with my 5-year-old son after about two years of urging. I read a report in an American newspaper not long ago that clowns and animals were being removed from GDR circuses and political propaganda substituted. On Sunday I could find no propaganda, unless the appearance of guest clowns and animal trainers from the Soviet Union somehow fits into this category. As for animals, I must admit that my son is never fully satisfied in this respect; but for my wife and me the assorted horses, ponies, camels, elephants and tigers were quite sufficient.

Other attractions for children in East Berlin this month include a special variety show with TV fairy-tale figures, puppet shows, the children's theatre and, of course, the Christmas Market.

Almost everyone, young and old, visits the Christmas Market during December. A combination of amusement park and buying centre, it offers something for almost everybody — from a candied apple or a carousel ride for the kiddies to a stiff grog for their chilled and weary daddies. Special attraction this year is a big arts and crafts tent for the children, where they can make plastic toys, presents for their parents or Christmas decorations. There is also a noticeable stress on spacemen and spaceships in many fun rides, decorations and toys. Luckily, however, there is not the over-emphasis on inappropriate political slogans I observed at last year's market. This year the emphasis is simply on peace and happy children, and I think that is quite sufficient.

Ice, Health, Jazz

As for the adults, the December entertainment programme includes a big ice show and the usual year-round variety of sport events, concerts and illustrated lectures on travel, health and a dozen other subjects. There has recently been a marked increase in jazz evenings, both for adults and for the younger set, with groups from home and from Czechoslovakia and Poland. At the other musical extreme, the Thomaners — a boys' choir from Bach's old Thomas Church in Leipzig — will present special concerts with carols and Christmas music, and several churches will of course feature Bach's Christmas Oratorio.

But shopping is everyone's main occupation in the days before Christmas. East Berlin's many book and record shops are jammed; so are stores selling clothing, sweets and the little wooden figurines and decorations carved in the southern mountain regions of the country. Most crowded of all, I am sure, are the toy shops.

The custom here is to decorate Christmas trees and distribute presents on Christmas Eve. The main attraction on Christmas Day itself is the roast goose. Then, with Christmas and the usually concurrent stomach troubles finally fading into the past, another culinary tradition takes its place a week later. This is the New Year's carp, accompanied by jelly doughnuts and followed by lots of drinking and an almost frightening amount of fireworks. Last year, on my block, our neighbours' supply lasted a long, loud half hour into the newly-begun 1961.

In conclusion, I should mention one less violent tradition in the GDR. On New Year's Eve and New Year's Day there are special performances — always sold out — of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, with its ringing "All men shall become brothers" chorus at the end. This is certainly a good way to close the Christmas season and start a new year.

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167/III, Berlin W 8, Telephone 22 29 68. Printed in the German Democratic Republic by (304). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 des Presseamtes beim Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik